Introduce Tribal Project Partner Collaboration
Improve Adult Client Access to Chemical Health Services
Improve Child Safety, Permanency, Well-Being for RPG Clients

White Earth Nation RPG

White Earth Band of Ojibwe
RPG for the Child Well-Being Program

White Earth Band of Ojibwe Gizhaawaaso
"Protector of the Young"

White Earth Nation

The Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) and two American Indian tribes began work in 2006 to develop new models for providing appropriate services for tribal members.

Building tribal child welfare capacity to design and develop tribal approaches that ensure child safety, permanency and well-being

Transferring responsibilities from counties to tribes to deliver a full continuum of child welfare services to American Indian children and families on these two reservations.
Minnesota State Statute authorized the American Indian Child Welfare Initiative. This resulted in Exclusive Jurisdiction over Child Welfare Proceedings on the White Earth Reservation.

It is slated for legislative expansion to the Minneapolis – St. Paul Metro Area.
**Child Protection Workers**

- Ensure safety of children.
- Provide services that address well-being of the family.
- Ensure family or culturally appropriate placements.
- Generate relative placements for children that can be safe and appropriate permanency options.

**Intake and Assessment Workers**

- Maltreatment Reports
- Triage
- Family Assessments or Investigations
- Supervisor Inquiry during field work

**SELF Program**

- We service approximately 50 on Reservation children to assist in their educational neglect needs.
- Children have to meet ICWA eligibility.
- Educational neglect constitutes an open CHIPS case through White Earth Tribal Court.
- Provide ongoing Case Management and services to the child and family as necessary on a case by case as necessary to support the child’s educational needs.
- One of our strengths is that we follow children when they move around to area communities, so the case isn’t bouncing from county to county.
**Foster Care Program**
- Recruits
- Trains
- Licenses
- Monitors
- Ensures Tribal and Federal compliance measures
- 85 licensed Tribal Foster Homes

**IVE/MA**
- Oversees and manages the entire financial portion of the IVE program to ensure objectives are met and Tribal, State and Federal standards are met.
- Process IVE/MA eligibility determinations on each child in placement through WE ICW eligible under the Initiative.
- Completes healthcare applications on children to enroll them in medical assistance programs.
- Tracks medical assistance mileage for program reimbursement.

**Family Preservation**
- Talking Circles, Family Wraparounds, Signs of Safety, Respite Care (Utilized by RPG clients)

**Customary Adoptions**
- Why the need for customary adoptions?
- What is their role in “Permanency”?
- Do they apply for adoption subsidies?
Long Term Homelessness Supportive Staff & Housing

- Dream Catcher Homes in Ojema serves people who meet the criteria and definition of Long Term Homeless. They currently have housing that supports and promotes sober living.
- They provide case management, living skills, social gatherings, traditional groups such as crafts, beading, sweats, traditional meal preparation and traditional mental health services. (Utilized heavily in the RPG)

Licensed Addiction Drug Counselors (RPG Specific)

- Provide Rule 25 Assessments and treatment recommendations as needed per the assessment.
- Provides AA meetings and recovery resources to families.
- Provides intensive outpatient treatment.
- Provide Culturally focused recovery curriculum.

White Earth Tool, by Toni Napier, Child Protection Social Worker

- What is it?
- How Was it Developed?
- What is it Based on?
- Why the Medicine Wheel?

What is It?

- The White Earth Tool, at a snapshot:
  - Physical component assessment
  - Mental component assessment
  - Emotional component assessment
  - Spiritual component assessment
The Medicine Wheel

- The four directions
- The four medicines
- The cycles of Life
- The four seasons
- The four elements
- The four bodily states (physical, emotional, spiritual, mental) that keep one in balance

What assessment tools were we using?

- Structured Decision Making Tools, including Risk Assessments incorporated into the State SACWIS system
- Nothing that was culturally based
- Nothing that considered all four aspects of an individual
- Things were not strength-based
- Things that were not assessing routine needs our clients had

Why the Need for Something Different?
Why Base an Assessment Tool on the Medicine Wheel?

• Culturally Appropriate
• Includes Historical Trauma
• Strength Based
• Can Capture More Needs of a Family
• Is Interactive and Generates Dialogue

Examples of Questions on the White Earth Tool:

Physical
- I’ve had a medical check-up this year and am taking care of my medical needs
- I’ve got healthcare insurance or IHS
- I’ve been to the dentist this year
- My children had their well-child checks
- I do not have chemical use

Mental
- I have my high school diploma or GED
- My kids are attending school and not truant
- I have reliable income to support us
- I have family members who help me

Emotional
- I don’t have any previous trauma in my life
- I have a therapist or healer who helps me with my mental health
- I have a supportive partner
- I don’t have an abusive partner
- I have children who don’t have emotional or behavioral concerns
- I have help and support with my children
Spiritual

- I have the resources to seek out spiritual help
- I know where to go to seek out spiritual help
- I know which spiritual base I gain help from
- I include spirituality in my life
- I use spirituality when things are difficult
- I use spirituality in my recovery
- I know my name, clan, and colors
- I have received this also for my children

From a Social Worker's Perspective

Why Did I Start Using the White Earth Tool?

What Adaptations Have I Made to It?

What Are Some of the Things I Find Valuable About It?

White Earth Nation

Broader Systems Impact of Data
By Cyndi Anderson, Project Evaluator

White Earth Nation

- It is still early, but we are beginning to see encouraging signs in the data that reflect improved Family Needs Scale scores when there is a stronger, identified connection to culture and tradition.
White Earth Nation’s Use of the Cultural Tool

- Administer the White Earth Tool/Family Needs Scale on a quarterly basis for clients engaged in RPG program.
- Additional Programs are incorporating the White Earth Tool/Family Needs Scale into their assessments.

White Earth Nation Tool/Family Needs Scale 

**Client Scores by Quadrants of Medicine Wheel**

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<th>Significant Problem for Client (1)</th>
<th>Somewhat of a Problem for Client (3)</th>
<th>Not a Problem for the Client (5)</th>
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<td>Emotional</td>
<td>22</td>
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<td>Physical</td>
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<td>30</td>
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<td>Spiritual/Cultural</td>
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<td>Total Maximum</td>
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White Earth Nation

**Unique Client Beg/End Date**

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White Earth Tool Results Overview:

- 171 Unique Individuals Completed the Tool
- 67 of the 171 had only one data point, so they are not included in comparisons
- 104 (60.8%) of Unique Individuals had 2-5 data points
- A Random Sample (every 10th Unique Individual) Score are provided for comparison
These scores only tell part of the story.
For each individual, we are digging deeper to review which spiritual/cultural/traditional services they received.
We are just beginning to look at data from RPG in relationship to the White Earth Tool data.

**RPG Data and White Earth Tool**
White Earth Nation

**BIG PICTURE OVERVIEW:**
- Historically, data for White Earth Nation has been co-mingled and/or misidentified rendering it not useful to the Nation.
- Impact of RPG data collection, Tribal Home Visiting data collection and evidence-based research elements have all contributed to the broader question related to Tribal data systems.

White Earth Nation

- In process of developing universal data sharing across Tribal systems
- Integrating data systems with appropriate security and controls
- Result will be reliable Tribal data, owned by the White Earth Nation, from which planning and programming can be developed

White Earth Nation Health & Human Services Transfer Project:
- Will transfer responsibility for all Health and Human Services programs currently provided through county units to the White Earth Nation.
- Information Technology and Data Systems are a key part of this assumption of services and will allow us increased collaboration and project partners

White Earth Nation

- Will allow for accurate Tribal service delivery numbers.
- Will help to reduce any duplication of service.
- Most importantly, will help to assure that services are delivered in a culturally competent and respectful manner.
- Will strengthen the White Earth Nation on multiple levels.
White Earth Nation

Summary:
- RPG data processes have provided excellent foundations and frameworks from which to build.
- Increased our knowledge and skills in the value of data and how to use it.
- Still on a learning curve - but can’t “undo” the value of what has been learned in the process.

Better assessment tools help us identify social, emotional needs of caregivers and children that are not otherwise captured by state assessment tools.
- More comprehensive assessments up front allow us to collaborate better with project partners to make those connections in the first place, and make them more timely.

Use Of The Assessment Tool: It’s Impact On Our Data, and Lessons Learned Moving Forward

The tool that allowed us to capture so much more in terms of family needs, in a culturally appropriate way. We lost this to data collection because some of our state systems didn’t collect information necessary for the RPG. We collected data through the WE Tool quarterly and reported on it in our semi-annual reports. We utilized the data for our own program improvements. Our data demonstrated to us we needed to focus more on children’s trauma services up front, so that was a change we made. Our data also demonstrated to us that the more spiritually based services we incorporated, the higher the overall scores were for clients. Our data also demonstrated that the better we understood our impact, the more comprehensive and timely services.

White Earth’s 5 Year RPG Experience

Collaboration among other tribal partners was created and will be sustained.
- Collaboration meant increased access and timeliness to services for clients.
- Collaboration meant fruitful, frequent, interdisciplinary team meetings to improve service delivery.
- Data collection led to meaningful program improvements, including:
  - Development of a culturally appropriate assessment tool.
  - Program improvements led to better outcomes for families in:
    - Safety (Reduced maltreatment)
    - Well-Being (socio-emotional)
    - Culturally appropriate permanency, which includes Reunification.
We would like to say “Migwetch!” (thank you) for the opportunity this RPG has afforded our Tribal Community.

We believe there is an opportunity to collect really meaningful data from our program, moving forward, in the use of a culturally appropriate assessment tool and its impacts on trauma-focused practice for Child Welfare in Indian Country.

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